

299



Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
February 5, 2009  
American Cancer Society Testimony

**SB 299 - An Act Expanding Health Insurance Coverage for Routine Patient Care Costs  
For Clinical Trial Patients**

The American Cancer Society urges your support of SB 299, An Act Expanding Health Insurance Coverage for Routine Patient Care Costs for Clinical Trial Patients.

Clinical trials are research studies to test new drugs or other treatments to treat a variety of diseases. These studies compare treatments that are in use today (standard treatments) with other new methods. Clinical trials are an important part of cancer care. Without the use of clinical trials there would not have been major advances in treating cancer and other diseases.

Usually when a patient enrolls in a clinical trial, the cost of tests, procedures, drugs, extra doctor visits and any research directly related to the study itself is covered by the group that sponsors the clinical trial. The sponsor of the clinical trial may be the government, a drug company, the National Cancer Institute, or some other agency. Sometimes a health plan may define clinical trials as "experimental" or "investigational." When this happens, health insurance may not cover some of the costs of what is actually routine care. This routine care costs include doctor visits and tests or treatments that you would have received if you were not taking part in a clinical trial.

It is important that cancer patients have insurance that covers clinical trials. Lack of insurance coverage can keep patients who might want to be in a clinical trial from taking part in it. In one survey, 60% of patients said they feared having their insurance denied as a major reason for not signing up to take part in a clinical trial. Another study found that there was an increase in medical costs for adult clinical trial patients when compared with patients who were not in clinical trials. Each year there are well over 500 new cancer medications that are in the clinical trial phase throughout the country. Without patients taking part in these trials, we will not be able to make positive advancements in the treatment of cancer.

The American Cancer Society is in support of SB 299 and stands ready to assist the Insurance and Real Estate committee and the entire legislature in helping patients save costs in an effort to make advancements in health treatments.